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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Lithuania

Addendum

Information provided by Lithuania in follow-up to the concluding observations*

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Note: The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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1. In order to ensure implementation of the recommendations contained in the Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Lithuania, on 29 May 2015 the Minister of Social Security and Labour set up a working group comprising representatives of different state institutions and non-governmental organizations. The working group meets regularly to discuss the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations (the latest meeting was held on 22 February 2016).

Paragraph 15 — the Committee recommends the State should:

(a) **Strengthen the mandate and authority of and the level of representation of line ministries in the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to enable it to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the National Programme effectively.**

2. Interinstitutional Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was established by the Government (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) on 7 March 2000. One of its main tasks is to coordinate the implementation of the measures of the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (hereinafter referred to as the National Programme).

3. With a view to strengthen the mandate of the Commission, a questionnaire on possible draft amendments to the Regulations of the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) was drawn up and sent out to the Members of the Commission on 29 December 2015. Taking into account the feedback received, draft amendments to the Regulation were prepared, where the following areas were addressed: entities eligible for delegating their representatives to the Commission, aspects of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the Commission, organization of the work of the Commission, and strengthening the status of the Commission. Proposals on the draft amendments to the Regulations of the Commission were discussed at the meeting of the Commission on 18 February 2016.

4. With a view to strengthening the mandate of the Commission, its influence and representation of ministries, discussions were held on the possibilities of expanding the list of the institutions which could delegate their representatives to the Commission, with possible involvement of the Association of Lithuanian Municipalities and universities' gender studies centres. The possibility of delegating high-ranked representatives, who would have a deputy in case of their absence, to the Commission was considered. The need to ensure the rotation of representatives from non-governmental organizations and academic sector in the Commission was discussed.

5. Taking into account the results of the discussions, the Ministry Social Security and Labour is in the course of preparation of draft amendments to the Regulations of the Commission in order to strengthen its mandate and status as recommended by the Committee.

(b) **Increase the financial and human resources of the Gender Equality Unit.**

6. The Unit for Equality between Women and Men is an independent structural unit of the Ministry, the purpose of which is to ensure the implementation of the

policy for equality between women and men, to coordinate the ensuring of equal opportunities for women and men in all areas, and to ensure the implementation of the European Union's and international obligations on issues of equality between women and men. The Unit has 3 employees, 2 of which are civil servants and one works under an employment contract. Financing is allocated within the framework of the Action Plan for Implementation of the National Programme (hereinafter referred to as the Action Plan). The Action Plan establishes specific measures, deadlines for their implementation, institutions in charge, and need for state budget funds for the implementation of each measure.

(c) **Ensure that every Ministry allocates a special budget for the effective implementation of the National Programme.**

7. In accordance with the provisions of the Law on the Budget Structure of the Republic of Lithuania, the appropriations from the state and municipal budgets shall be used for the performance of the duties of the state and municipalities. Budget appropriations shall be managed by appropriations managers. In accordance with Article 4(1) of the Law on Budget Structure, appropriations managers shall be the managers of the institutions specified in the state budget approved by the Parliament (in Ministries, the Ministers or their authorized representatives). For the implementation of specific measures of the Action Plan, each Ministry, responsible for those measures, allocates separate budget, if needed.

8. Each Ministry implementing the measures of the National Programme must provide a report on the implemented measures and the achieved results to the Ministry, and the latter shall provide the report to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. There is no other mechanism ensuring that sufficient funds are appropriated for the implementation of the measures.

(e) **Ensure monitoring of the effectiveness of the National Programme in all regions of the State party based on time-bound targets and indicators and extend the application of the National Programme beyond 2014.**

9. At the beginning of 2015, the Fourth National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2015-2021 was approved. The Action Plan for Implementation 2015-2017 of the National Programme was approved by Order No. A1-199 of 13 April 2015 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.

10. The National Programme and the Action Plan, apart from the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Lithuania, are the main operative documents on national level aiming at ensuring gender equality. The strategic goal of the National Programme is consistent, complex and systematic promotion of the equality between women and men and elimination of discrimination between women and men in all areas. There are four main goals of the National Programme:

(a) To promote equal opportunities for women and men in the field of employment and occupation;

(b) Balanced involvement of women and men in decision-making and holding the top posts;

(c) To improve effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality;

(d) To promote integration of the gender aspect.

11. All Ministries, municipalities, Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Opportunities, National Courts Administration, the Association of Lithuania's municipalities, NGOs, social partners (trade unions and employers' organizations), gender studies centres of universities were involved in the preparation of the Action Plan.

12. Implementation of the Action Plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The progress of implementation of different measures is discussed and information on the outcome is presented at the meetings of the Commission on a yearly basis. Responsible institutions inform the Commission and society about the planned events as well as about the implementation of certain measures by publishing annual information on their website, Information portal for women, through electronic network of women's organizations, etc.

13. Article 3 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Lithuania establishes the duty for all state and municipal institutions and enterprises to ensure equal rights for women and men to be established in all legislation developed and adopted by the latter, to develop and implement programmes and measures aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, to provide administrative and public services without infringing equal rights of women and men, to support the programmes implemented by public institutions, associations, charities and other NGOs, which help to ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

14. In order to help municipalities to take actions ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, in 2016 the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson began the implementation of paragraph 6.4 "To enhance the ensuring of the equality of women and men at the level of local self-government" of Task 6 "To help municipalities to take actions ensuring the equality of women and men" of Objective "To improve the efficiency of the institutional mechanisms for the equality of women and men" of the National Programme. The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson has been preparing a project which will be financed from the European Union funds for 2014-2020. The objective of the measure is to encourage the equality of women and men at the local level.

15. In Lithuania, there is no special mechanism dedicated to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the measures of the Action Plan in all the regions of the State.

Paragraph 23 — Taking into account general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, 1994, the Committee encourages the Government:

(b) **To adopt a comprehensive strategy, which would complement the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims for 2014-2020, aimed at eliminating sex- and gender-based violence against women in all its forms in public and private life, and set up an adequate coordinating and monitoring mechanism, or mandate an**

existing mechanism, to effectively prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women.

16. With a view to eliminate domestic violence and to effectively prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women on 28 May 2014 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the 2014-2020 National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims (hereinafter referred to as the Programme), the objective of which is to reduce the level of domestic violence state-wide.

17. The objectives of the Programme are: to increase public awareness about different manifestations of violence, its consequences and necessity to prevent it as well as to encourage intolerance to violent behaviour; to improve the mechanism of complex assistance provision to the victims of violence based on the co-operation of state and municipal institutions and bodies, non-governmental organizations, other bodies, organizations and the general public.

18. The 2014-2016 Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2014-2020 National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims providing for measures and funds for the implementation of the Programme was approved on 24 September 2014 by the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

19. The Action plan envisages measures aimed at: organization of information campaigns on the prevention of domestic violence; support for projects of NGOs and institutions, targeted at the prevention of domestic violence and assistance; storing and systematization of data; competence building of specialists through organization of training; improvement of the system of imposing sanctions on convicted abusers in penitentiary institutions and probation services; support for organizations working with abusers; supervisions, etc.

20. The interdepartmental working group for coordinating and resolving issues on protection against domestic violence was formed by Order No. 212 of 14 June 2013 of the Prime Minister.

21. The working group was commissioned to coordinate and resolve issues related to the reduction of domestic violence and to provide the Prime Minister with proposals on the further improvement of legal acts regulating the reduction of domestic violence as well as improvement of cooperation between state institutions and non-governmental organizations. The working group includes Members of the Parliament and representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Ministry of Health, the Prison Department, the Police Department, the General Prosecutor's Office, the National Courts Administration, and the Association of Lithuanian Municipalities.

(c) **To regularly collect, analyse and publish data on cases of all forms of violence against women and girls that have been reported, investigated and prosecuted.**

22. Data on reports received, prejudicial investigations instituted, refusals to institute prejudicial investigations, number of aggrieved persons, and suspected of domestic violence are accumulated in the Register of Events Registrable by Police of the Police Information System. These data are analysed and published in the

section *Gyvenkime be smurto* (Let's live without violence) of the Police Department and are also made public through conferences, seminars, and various mass media.

23. Every month, on the basis of the Departmental Register of Criminal Actions, the Information Technology and Communications Department draws up the report headed "Data on the criminal actions and persons suspected (accused) of committing criminal actions associated with domestic violence (Form Violence — ITĮ)" and publishes them on the internet at www.ird.lt.

(d) **To provide crisis and walk-in centres that offer protection and assistance to all women who are victims of violence.**

24. Since 2012, 17 Specialized Assistance Centres operated by NGOs provide specialized complex assistance to persons suffering from domestic violence in Lithuania. Activities of Specialized Assistance Centres are financed from the funds of the state budget. It should also be noted that accommodation services and other necessary assistance, if required, can be provided to women suffering from domestic violence in almost all municipalities (50 out of 60).